

18. Summary of Dimensional Standards in the Zoning Districts

(See zoning ordinance [§ 78-301.2](#), Table of Dimensional Standards in the Residential Zoning Districts, and [§ 78-302.2](#), Table of Dimensional Standards in the Business Zoning Districts)

The Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance User Guide series provides the public with general information on land use regulations affecting activities undertaken by the public and administered by the Herndon Department of Community Development. It is not intended to be a complete statement of all applicable regulations. Individuals are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at community.development@herndon-va.gov or 703-787-7380 for complete permitting requirements.

What are Dimensional Standards?

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides that local jurisdictions may zone land according to land use, based on the local comprehensive plan. The Mayor and Town Council adopted a zoning ordinance which is regulatory and which describes where land use activities may be conducted within the town. The zoning ordinance is a legal document and its regulations are law. In addition to providing information about land uses permitted in each zoning district, the zoning ordinance prescribes where buildings may be placed on a lot as well as the building's size and height. These are "dimensional standards" and they differ depending on the use of the building and whether it is located in a residential district, business district, industrial district, or planned development district.

The attached tables list dimensional standards for each zoning district (other than planned development districts.) These standards may be further limited or modified by other applicable zoning ordinance provisions. The town staff is available to answer specific questions.

Planned development districts do not appear in the tables of dimensional standards because there is great flexibility in planned development districts. Using criteria listed in the regulations for each type of planned development district, the developer, the town staff, and town leaders work together to achieve design objectives. For standards in Planned Development Districts, see [§ 78-303](#), *Planned Development Districts*.

What do the terms in the tables mean?

Dimensional standards are expressed using terms that are specifically defined in the zoning ordinance. Some of those terms include:

- ☐ **Buffer.** An area of land that: (a) typically includes landscaping, berms, walls, fences, setbacks and required yards; (b) is located between land uses of different character; and (c) is intended to mitigate negative impacts of the more intense use on a less intense use or vacant parcel. (See also § 78-503, *Site Landscaping*, for buffer requirements.)
- ☐ **Building height.** The vertical distance, from the grade to:
 - (1) The highest point of the coping of a flat roof;
 - (2) The deck line of a mansard roof;
 - (3) The mean height level between the highest ridge and its highest associated eaves for gable, hip and gambrel roofs.
- ☐ **Coverage, lot.** The percentage of the lot covered by buildings or structures.
- ☐ **Density, gross.** The number of dwelling units on a particular tract or parcel of land divided by the entire area of that tract or parcel. Density is expressed as "dwellings per acre."
- ☐ **Floor area ratio.** A quotient determined by dividing the total floor area of all buildings on a lot, by the gross area of the lot. Atriums not designed for occupancy and not occupied, and parking structures, both above and below grade, are excluded from the computation of floor area ratio.
- ☐ **Impervious surface.** A surface composed of any material that significantly impedes or prevents natural infiltration of water into the soil. Impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to roofs, buildings, streets, parking areas, and any concrete, asphalt or compacted gravel area and similar ground coverings.

- **Lot width.** The distance between the side lot lines measured at the required front yard line.
- **Lot area.** The total area included within the lot lines of a lot.
- **Open space.** Land that is not occupied by a building, parking or loading space, vehicular travel lane, driveway, street, or sidewalk in the public right-of-way. Open space may contain landscaping, walks, paths, trails, plazas, storm water management facilities provided as a landscape amenity, play equipment, pools, basketball courts, and the like. See also definition of "green space," and open space standards in Article V.
- **Setback.** The minimum distance by which any building or structure must be separated from the front lot line or any lot line adjoining a street.
- **Yard.** That portion of a lot area and the space above it not containing any portion of a principal structure, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter.
- **Yard, front.** A yard extending across the front of a lot between the side lot lines, the minimum depth of which is the required setback. On corner lots, the front yard shall be considered as parallel to the streets upon which the lot has frontage.
- **Yard, rear.** A yard extending across the rear of the lot between the side lot lines on interior lots, the depth of which is the minimum parallel distance between the rear lot line and the rear of the main building.
- **Yard, side.** A yard between the main building and the side line of the lot and extending from the setback line to the rear yard on interior lots, the width of which being the minimum horizontal distance between the side lot line and the side of the main building.

What is the consequence if a landowner cannot meet the Dimensional Standards?

As described in [§ 78-203, Enforcement and Remedies](#), compliance with all provisions of the zoning ordinance is required and any failure to comply with a requirement, standard, prohibition, or limitation imposed by the zoning ordinance, or the terms or conditions of any permit or other development approval or authorization granted pursuant to this chapter, is a violation of the zoning ordinance.

When the Zoning Administrator finds that any activity, building, structure, or land is in violation of the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Administrator notifies, in writing, the person violating the zoning ordinance. If the violation is not corrected within a reasonable period of time, as provided in the notification, the Zoning Administrator takes appropriate action to correct and abate the violation and to ensure compliance with the ordinance. Any person, firm or corporation who is the owner of any land, building or structure, or the agent having possession or control of such property as employee, lessee, tenant, architect, builder, contractor or otherwise, knowingly refuses or neglects to comply with any written order issued by the Zoning Administrator to abate any violation of the zoning ordinance is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$10.00 nor more than \$1,000.00.

If the violation is uncorrected at the time of the conviction, the court orders the violator to abate or remedy the violation in compliance with the zoning ordinance, within a time period established by the court. Failure to remove or abate a zoning violation within the specified time period constitutes a separate misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of not less than \$10.00 and no more than \$1,000.00. Any such failure during any succeeding ten-day period constitutes a separate misdemeanor offense for each ten-day period, punishable by a fine of not less than \$10.00 and no more than \$1,500.00.

Need more information?

Have a question regarding required permits, the permit process, or application requirements? Call 703-787-7380 or e-mail community.development@herndon-va.gov to make an appointment to see a member of the Department of Community Development.

Have a question regarding Building Permits or construction codes? Call 703-435-6850 or e-mail buildinginspections@herndon-va.gov to make an appointment to see the Building Official.

Visit the Planning and Zoning page on the Town's web site, www.herndon-va.gov to view the Department of Community Development web site for the Zoning Ordinance User Guide series or to access the town code. Town offices are located at the Herndon Municipal Center at 777 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia, 20170.

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